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Chairman: Mr. Alyaksandr Sychou . . . . . (Belarus)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda items 60 to 81 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Sir, at the outset please allow me, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to extend congratulations to you on your election as Chairman of this important Committee. I am confident that your diplomatic skill and long experience will lead the Committee's work to a successful conclusion.

Since the collapse of the cold-war structure, new and positive changes have taken place in international relations, and some progress has also been made in the efforts of the international community to achieve disarmament and security. However, the new hope of the international community for disarmament and security after the end of the cold war has not yet been realized. Lack of confidence between countries and nations has given rise to aggravated tensions and armed conflicts in several parts of the world, endangering international security and peace and increasing international arms transfers and the arms race.

The most pressing issue in disarmament following the end of the cold war is the realization of complete nuclear disarmament. Even today, after the collapse of the bipolar structure of East-West confrontation, the nuclear-weapon States have not discarded the outdated doctrine that nuclear weapons serve as a deterrent to war. They try to justify the existence of nuclear weapons and refuse to display a will to abolish nuclear weapons unconditionally.

What is important in achieving nuclear disarmament is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, together with a nuclear- test ban and the suspension of the production of nuclear weapons. The elimination of nuclear weapons is not a question of method and procedure. It is a question of the will and determination of nuclear-weapon States to dismantle all nuclear weapons unconditionally and completely, in keeping with the desire of humankind. As long as even one nuclear weapon remains on the Earth, humankind can not escape the nuclear threat.

Nuclear-weapon States should give non-nuclear-weapon States an unconditional assurance of the non-use of nuclear weapons against them. They should also set a detailed timetable for eliminating nuclear weapons and implement it without reservations.

At present, arms transfers and the increased arms race resulting therefrom have become one of the root causes of threats to world peace and security. Arms exports by the developed countries to the developing countries are increasing remarkably and are aggravating the overall international situation, in particular in regions with ongoing disputes.

At the same time, the modernization and sophistication of military equipment are being actively accelerated under the cover of disarmament, while joint research, development and production of modern military hardware is being carried out in the developed countries. This is a great threat to international peace and security and stimulates the arms race between countries.

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Regional peace and security play an important role in ensuring international security. Since the end of the cold war, signs of trends towards relaxation and cooperation have been witnessed in several parts of the world. But Asia, and in particular north-east Asia, remains the most unstable region because there the legacy of the cold war still exists. Military collusion between the United States and Japan and the United States and South Korea has come out into the open on the Korean peninsula and in its vicinity. Meanwhile, large-scale joint military exercises aimed at expanding their spheres of influence are being conducted under the pretext of strengthening security regimes.

At present, the undisguised attempt by Japan to acquire nuclear armaments and convert its country into a military Power constitutes a most dangerous element in north-east Asia. Today, when the balance of power has been destroyed, Japan, together with the United States, is attempting to expand the scope of application of Japanese-United States defence cooperation and tightening military ties with South Korea, advocating the theory of contingency with regard to its country and, in particular, that of an "emergency" on the Korean peninsula.

The typical example of this is Japan's attempt, in alliance with the United States, to develop a theatre missile-defence system and to establish the Japan-United States of America security-industry forum, in disregard of strong opposition from our country and the other Asian countries.

Such a move by Japan gives rise to serious concern not only among the Korean people but in other Asian countries as well. It will stoke the arms race in the region and finally lead to an extreme situation.

Japan should immediately abandon its attempt to become a military Power and achieve nuclear armament and instead atone and apologize for its past aggressive crimes and make an honest, sincere post-war settlement.

Ensuring peace and security on the Korean peninsula is a vital issue directly linked to peace in Asia and the world. Confidence-building between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States is a prerequisite to removing the threat of war and ensuring lasting peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

The sincere implementation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Framework Agreement is the essential for building confidence between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States today. That Agreement, which was adopted two years ago and is now under implementation, has opened up prospects for the fair resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and for confidence-building between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. The great leader comrade Kim Il Sung said that the key to the resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula lies in confidence-building between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States and the provision of a light-water reactor system.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Framework Agreement specifies in detail the issues surrounding the replacement of our graphite-moderated reactor system with a light-water system and normalization of political and economic relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States.

Within one month of the date of the Framework Agreement, we froze most of our graphite-moderated reactors and related nuclear facilities under the terms of the document and have since then allowed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to monitor the freeze.

In December last year, the supply contract for the light- water reactor project was concluded between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO), organized under the auspices of the United States leadership, and ad hoc, routine IAEA inspections of facilities that are not subject to the freeze were resumed in January this year.

Recently, European countries, including Germany and France, and certain Latin American countries, including Argentina, with a correct understanding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Framework Agreement, have been taking a positive attitude towards implementation of the Agreement.

In order to ensure the fundamental resolution of the nuclear issue through the full implementation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Framework Agreement, it is important for the United States to respect sincerely its obligations, including the alleviation of economic sanctions, subject to the Agreement.

In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Framework Agreement, both sides agreed to reduce trade and investment barriers, including restrictions on telecommunications services and financial transactions, within three months of the date of the signing of the document.

In order to establish confidence between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, the United States should implement its commitment under the Framework Agreement, and the present confrontational relations between the two countries should be converted into relations based on confidence.

Furthermore, the international community, in particular countries around the Korean peninsula, should refrain from putting the brakes on implementation of the Framework Agreement. The non-friendly policy towards our country consistently pursued by certain countries can be of no help for the settlement of the issue. If the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is resolved fundamentally through the implementation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Framework Agreement, it will no doubt help remove regional tensions and establish confidence, thus contributing to the maintenance of world peace.

For the full implementation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Framework Agreement, which has entered a new stage, peace and security should be ensured on the Korean peninsula. To ensure durable peace and security on the Korean peninsula and build confidence between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States today, a new peace mechanism should be established to replace the outdated armistice system. That system, under which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States have warring relations, has no function in preventing any unforeseen outbreak of armed conflicts or war, due to the completely paralysed armistice supervisory tools. As long as it remains in place, the danger of war will never be removed, and, accordingly, mistrust between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States will not be eliminated either.

Forty-three years have elapsed since the end of war in Korea, but durable peace has not yet prevailed on the Korean peninsula.

The United States concluded the United States-South Korea military treaty soon after the signing of the Armistice Agreement, which meant total rejection of the Armistice Agreement. And the United States breached subparagraph 13 of the Armistice Agreement, which provides for cessation of the introduction into Korea of military equipment and combat material, and instead increased armed forces on a large scale and even introduced nuclear weapons, thus turning South Korea into the largest arsenal in the world.

The Armistice Agreement and armistice supervisory bodies were totally paralysed by the United States.

In 1956 the United States obstructed the activities of a Neutral Nations Inspection Team. Moreover, it appointed a General of the South Korean Army, who has neither qualification nor power, as senior member of the United Nations forces membership of the Military Armistice Commission (MAC) in 1991. Thus, the function and role of the Military Armistice Commission were completely paralysed.

In this situation, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea advanced a proposal in April 1994 calling for the replacement of the outdated armistice system with a new peace system.

However, even today, more than two years later, the United States still refuses to respond to our proposal. Instead, it deploys huge armed forces in South Korea and continues to stage large-scale war drills in place of "Team Spirit" joint military exercises. Meanwhile, the South Korean authorities, while engaging in an arms build-up, have turned the southern portion of the Military Demarcation Line into an acute war border zone instead of a buffer zone, and the Demilitarized Zone into a completely militarized and heavily armed zone.

Given the dangerous situation on the Korean peninsula at least an institutional device should be established to prevent the outbreak of armed conflict and war. Proceeding from this need, in February this year the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea put forward a proposal to sign an interim agreement between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States in order to prevent the outbreak of any armed conflict or war on the Korean peninsula.

That interim agreement covers issues concerning the management of the Military Demarcation Line and the Demilitarized Zone, ways of addressing cases of armed conflict and accidents, the composition, duties and terms of reference of a joint military body and other issues related to the maintenance of security and order. It also deals with the issue of the establishment and operation of a Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States joint military body in Panmunjŏm to implement and supervise the proposed interim agreement, replacing the Military Armistice Commission.

The proposed interim agreement shall take the place of the Armistice Agreement until the conclusion of a full peace agreement.

This proposal made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a reasonable one, initiated in view of the current status of Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States relations and the situation on the Korean peninsula, which is approaching an unexpected phase.

In July this year, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, through the statement of the spokesman for the Panmunjom Mission of the Korean People's Army, proposed to the United States forces side the resumption of working negotiations for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States general-level talks. It aims to establish, at an early date, a legitimate military channel of contact to prevent the imminent danger of accidental armed conflict before the signing of a peace agreement is discussed.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States are signatories to the Korean Armistice Agreement, and the United States has the real decision-making power on matters of security in South Korea. The tentative agreement will therefore, when signed by both sides, no doubt represent a breakthrough in negotiations on a permanent peace agreement.

The existence of the United Nations Command in South Korea is a great obstacle to peace and security on the Korean peninsula. The United Nations Command in South Korea was not established by a United Nations resolution. At present, only United States troops remain in the United Nations Command, which was moved towards dissolution without any post-war United Nations resolutions. This fact shows that the "US-ROK Joint Command" is misusing the helmet of the United Nations forces and the United Nations flag.

We hope that the international community will pay due attention to the implementation of resolution 3390 (XXX) B, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its thirtieth session, and which called for the dissolution of the United Nations Command in South Korea, the replacement of the Armistice Agreement with a peace agreement, and measures to take back the name and flag of the United Nations from United States troops in South Korea.

Korea should be reunified in order to ensure solid peace and security on the Korean peninsula. Peace and security on the Korean peninsula cannot be ensured if the division of the country and nation, which began in the 1940s, continues. The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung, who devoted his whole life to the cause of the country's reunification, put forward a proposal for national reunification through confederation. He also advanced the "Ten-point Programme of Great Unity of the Whole Nation for Reunification of the Country", which aimed at achieving the country's reunification through the unity of the whole nation, based on the national independent spirit.

The proposal for national reunification through confederation represents a feasible way of reunifying the country, on the basis of recognizing the differing ideologies and systems that have existed in the North and the South for almost half a century, since the national division forced by foreign forces. It would be based on the principle of neither side conquering or being conquered by the other, and on the promotion of national reconciliation. We will make every possible effort to implement the DPRK-United States Framework Agreement, establish a new peace mechanism and achieve the country's reunification.

Peace is the ideal, the desire, and the position constantly advocated by the Government of the DPRK. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will do its best to discharge its responsibility and duty according to the ideals of its foreign policy of independence, friendship and peace, by actively joining the efforts of the international community to realize comprehensive and complete disarmament and ensure international peace and security.

Our delegation expresses its hope that this Committee will conclude its work successfully in conformity with the desire of humankind for a free and peaceful new world.

Mr. Bustani (Brazil): Allow me to express the satisfaction of my delegation in seeing you, Sir, a respected diplomat from Belarus, as Chairman of the First Committee. We are sure that under your skilful guidance we will be able to advance the cause of disarmament and international security. I would also like to pay a tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Erdenechuluun, the former Permanent Representative of Mongolia. His tireless dedication to disarmament and to the United Nations is an inspiration for all of us.

As many Heads of Delegation pointed out during the general debate in plenary meetings of the General Assembly, the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) on 24 September 1996

marked an important moment. For the first time in 51 years, we may reasonably hope that humankind has witnessed the last of the nuclear-weapon test explosions — those dreadful, dangerous preparations for mass slaughter.

Already, even before its entry into force, the CTBT constitutes a powerful impediment to the holding of nuclear tests anywhere in the world. According to the law of treaties, it implies a moral — and, indeed, juridical — obligation on the part of nuclear-weapon States to forgo all nuclear testing. We can only rejoice at this. Brazil has campaigned for the prohibition of nuclear tests since 1962, when we took our seat at the opening of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENDC), the forerunner of the Conference on Disarmament. Indeed, the distant ancestor of the present Treaty is the eight-Power memorandum on a nuclear-test ban submitted by the neutral members of the ENDC: Brazil, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sweden and the United Arab Republic.

That initiative was perhaps ahead of its time — but history has vindicated us. As the recent reaction against nuclear testing showed, even within the nuclear-weapon States, civil society is increasingly questioning whether nuclear weapons are worth their risks and ever-increasing costs. The CTBT was never conceived as the end of the road. We were encouraged by the statement given by the President of the United States to the General Assembly in which he said that the CTBT

> "points us towards a century in which the roles and risks of nuclear weapons can be further reduced and ultimately eliminated." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 6th meeting, p. 1)*

We wholeheartedly agree with that statement. The twenty-first century must be the one in which the only weapon capable of eliminating life on Earth will itself be eliminated, and sooner rather than later.

I wish to share some of our thoughts on why this possibility is getting closer and closer. The Permanent Representative of Brazil, Ambassador Celso Amorim, had the honour to be invited by the Australian Government to be member of the Canberra Commission, which was charged with the task of conducting a thorough study of the question of the elimination of nuclear weapons. His fellow members of the Commission included diplomats, scientists, academics, politicians and military officers, including some who had had direct command over nuclear arsenals — control over the instruments of Armageddon. In geographical and professional terms, it was as diverse a group as one could possibly expect.

Their task included conducting a serious and balanced study of the security implications of nuclear disarmament. It was not a starry-eyed, idealistic exercise. The maintenance of strategic stability and the principle of undiminished security for all were always emphasized. Nevertheless, the conclusions of the Canberra Commission were unanimous and unequivocal. Nuclear weapons diminish the security of all States, including the States that possess them. They have no military utility other than that of deterring a comparably equipped opponent from using them. The continuation of the present situation, however, poses intolerable risks. The only way to reduce these risks is a progressive series of steps that would lead to complete elimination of that category of weapons.

I will not reproduce here the arguments and counter-arguments discussed by the Commission or outline the proposals and stages towards nuclear disarmament that it recommended. These can be found in the text of the report of the Canberra Commission.

In this context it is important to add that the International Court of Justice unanimously determined that there is a legal obligation not only to negotiate in good faith measures for nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, but also to bring those negotiations to a conclusion — that is to say, to eliminate nuclear weapons. The landmark Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice constitutes a new term of reference for all the efforts of the international community towards nuclear disarmament.

Brazil, which has already ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention, would like to reinforce the appeal for its universal ratification. While we welcome the continued commitment of President Clinton and President Yeltsin with regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we urge the United States and the Russian Federation to expedite their ratification of the Convention. Without the two declared chemical Powers, a reassessment of the procedures, mechanisms and time-frames of the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons may be inevitable.

Brazilian peacekeepers gained first-hand experience of the suffering created by the indiscriminate use of landmines in our sister nations of Mozambique and Angola, as well as in Central America. While the international community works for the ultimate goal of the elimination of anti-personnel landmines, all States should abide by the humanitarian restrictions imposed by the Convention on

Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). We would like to stress the importance of strengthening the authority of and ensuring wider participation in the CCW Convention. Ratification by all States of the amended Protocol II on landmines, as well as of the new Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons, is essential.

It is particularly important to keep landmines out of the hands of those who do not respect international humanitarian law. To this end, the Foreign Minister of Brazil announced, in his opening statement in the general debate, a unilateral, renewable four-year moratorium on the export of all anti-personnel landmines. Brazil also supports stronger efforts to combat clandestine trafficking in small arms and light weapons. In recent years we have learned the dangers associated with the links between arms smuggling, drug trafficking and terrorism. Closer cooperation to thwart international criminal organizations involved in arms trafficking is one of the new priorities on the world security agenda.

To return to nuclear issues, I would now like to present a proposal that Brazil and other countries will introduce in the First Committee this year. It is a draft resolution on a "nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas".

In several parts of the world the nuclear option has already been ruled out. This is a most significant development. Nuclear-weapon-free zones have been established in Latin America, through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and subsequently in the South Pacific, through the Treaty of Rarotonga; in South-East Asia, through the Treaty of Bangkok; and in Africa, through the Treaty of Pelindaba.

With the addition of the Antarctic Treaty, these treaties are freeing from nuclear weapons the peoples of the southern hemisphere, as well as those in the adjacent areas north of the Equator where the treaties apply. This fact led to our initiative, which aims at achieving recognition by the General Assembly of the emergence of a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. Many countries have expressed support for the initiative. The draft resolution expresses a legitimate concern of nuclear-weapon-free countries, which cover more than half of the surface of the world, and which are entitled to be spared from the threat of nuclear weapons. We consider recognition of the nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas as confirmation of the international commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament.

In addition, the promotion of the idea that most of the globe is nuclear-weapon-free will undoubtedly have effect as an example and add impetus to the process of nuclear disarmament and to the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Although our initiative will not by itself create new legal obligations, it is aimed at recalling the need to respect existing commitments under nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and their protocols, to ask all relevant States that have not yet done so to ratify such treaties and protocols, and to call upon them to consider further proposals for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The most direct effect of our initiative might be to imprint upon the public consciousness the image of a globe already free from the scourge of nuclear weapons over more than half of its surface. It is a powerful and suggestive idea — powerful because it is simple, and suggestive because it indicates a tendency towards gradually extending the nuclear-weapon-free areas until they cover the whole world. We ask all States to join in sponsoring and to support that draft resolution.

Mrs. Kurokochi (Japan): I should like to begin by extending to you, Sir, on behalf of the Japanese delegation, my warm congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you lead the important work of this Committee.

I would like at the outset to express the deep satisfaction of my Government, that, after two and a half years of negotiations in Geneva, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly with the support of the overwhelming majority of Member States. Japan, together with other like-minded countries, made strenuous efforts to achieve the conclusion and adoption of the CTBT. Underscoring the significance of the Treaty, Prime Minister Hashimoto himself signed it on 24 September, the very day on which it was opened for signature. The CTBT is indeed a historic milestone in the effort to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

To date, 124 countries have signed the Treaty, which is clear testimony to the strength of international support for the prohibition of nuclear testing. Japan is confident

that, in the light of the adoption of the Treaty, and given the widespread support that it enjoys, nuclear testing will never again be conducted anywhere in the world. My Government strongly hopes that as many countries as possible will sign and ratify the Treaty. In particular, we would like to call upon those countries that have expressed opposition to the Treaty to reconsider their position so that it can enter into force at the earliest possible date.

For its part, Japan will make every effort to contribute to the early and smooth establishment of an international system under the CTBT for the prohibition of nuclear testing. Today I would like to refer to a few examples of the efforts the Government of Japan will make towards that end. First, Japan is ready to provide a knowledgeable and experienced person to fill a senior-level post in the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the CTBT Preparatory Commission; and secondly, Japan is ready to make a prompt financial contribution to the Preparatory Commission to ensure its smooth establishment and operation. In addition, as Prime Minister Hashimoto said in his statement to the General Assembly last month, Japan will expand technical cooperation to concerned developing countries on seismic technologies, which comprise an essential part of the International Monitoring System for the detection of nuclear explosions. Japan is making these efforts in pursuit of its consistent approach: to make realistic, step-by-step progress on nuclear disarmament, with the aim of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

Permit me now to comment on other nuclear disarmament issues. First, I would like to stress the importance of the review process following the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Based on last year's decision on strengthening the review process of the Treaty, together with the decision to extend the Treaty, we should explore ways to move forward on the issues listed in the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament at the Preparatory Committee meetings to commence next year for the year-2000 review conference.

In an effort to contribute to making the review process as productive as possible, Japan will hold an international seminar on the theme of nuclear disarmament after the indefinite extension of the NPT, in Kyoto in early December. It is hoped that this seminar will facilitate the smooth start of the preparatory process for the next NPT review conference by providing an arena for a frank and in-depth exchange of views between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States in order to identify the future direction of nuclear disarmament efforts.

Secondly, I would like to comment on the issue of a cut-off with respect to fissile materials. As Prime Minister Hashimoto and Foreign Minister Ikeda have stressed, now that the CTBT has been adopted and opened for signature, Japan believes that negotiations on a cut-off treaty should commence as soon as possible at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Japan, for its part, continues to work towards this end. In this connection, I would point out that the Conference on Disarmament, in fact, decided by consensus in 1995 to establish an ad hoc committee for negotiations on such a treaty.

Thirdly, nuclear disarmament is an issue of common concern for the international community as a whole. As such, it demands the attention of all States, not just those which possess nuclear weapons. Thus, it is important to foster a spirit of mutual trust and constructive cooperation between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. For this purpose, we should strengthen the functioning and credibility of international disarmament bodies such as the Conference on Disarmament and the First Committee.

Japan will endeavour to promote realistic and feasible measures in order to facilitate further progress at the Conference on Disarmament towards nuclear disarmament. A cut-off treaty is certainly an important objective, but it is not the only one. Japan believes that the Conference on Disarmament should provide a forum to explore possible avenues for further nuclear disarmament — which is, in fact, one of the items on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

Fourthly, let me express our satisfaction at the withdrawal of all nuclear warheads from Ukraine and, shortly, from Belarus. These accomplishments are clear examples showing that arms control and disarmament efforts are in progress, as promised.

Problems relating to other weapons of mass destruction also demand our attention. In this regard, we hope that the upcoming Fourth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention will prove fruitful so that the ad-hoc group may make further progress in its current work, including the drafting of a rolling text.

Japan welcomes the fact that the Chemical Weapons Convention will soon go into effect. However, it notes that many countries, including the United States and Russia, have not yet ratified it. Japan strongly hopes that these countries will ratify it as soon as possible, and certainly before it enters into force.

While the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction cannot be overemphasized, we must also address the problems posed by conventional weapons, particularly in the light of the fact that they are actually being used in conflicts that are raging in various parts of the world today. Since the end of the cold war, world attention has been focused particularly on landmines, which have been called weapons of mass destruction in slow motion. It has been estimated that there are more than 100 million landmines remaining in the ground in various parts of the world. Each month they claim the lives of more than 800 people and injure thousands of others. Most of their victims are innocent civilians. This is above all a humanitarian problem, but the presence of landmines also creates obstacles to economic and social reconstruction in regions that have been torn apart by military conflict.

In Japan's view, it is important to take measures in the following four areas: first, in the strengthening of international restrictions on landmines; secondly, in mine-clearance activities by the United Nations and other organizations; thirdly, in the development of technologies for mine detection and clearance; and fourthly, in assistance for the rehabilitation of victims. With regard to the first point, restrictions, Japan intends to ratify the new Protocol II of the Chemical Weapons Convention at an early date, and is supporting international efforts towards a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. In order to strengthen international efforts in the other three areas, Japan is preparing to convene an international conference at the senior-official level. It is tentatively set for May 1997, in Tokyo.

I would like in this connection to refer to the international strategy conference that was organized by Canada this month. Initiatives such as these are important in strengthening and promoting international cooperation on this vital issue.

The excessive accumulation of small arms is another problem demanding our attention. Japan appreciates the progress made in the United Nations on the basis of General Assembly resolution 50/70 B, on which Japan took an initiative last year. We are gratified that the panel of governmental experts established by the Secretary-General is making progress on this grave problem, and we look forward to the panel's report, which the Secretary-General will transmit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session.

In the effort to enhance transparency in armaments, Japan attaches importance to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, among whose goals is the prevention of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of conventional weapons. Again, Japan calls upon States which have not yet done so to participate in the Register. In accordance with resolutions that have been adopted in the past, the Secretary-General will convene next year a group of governmental experts to consider ways of further developing the Register. We hope that the group will come up with realistic and effective proposals.

Finally, I would like to comment briefly on the significant contributions which the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament are making towards enhancing regional dialogue and promoting confidence. Japan particularly appreciates the contributions of the Kathmandu Centre, one of several such facilities in Asia and in the South Pacific, and will continue to extend assistance in support of its activities.

The year 1996 will surely be remembered as a landmark year in terms of progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. I trust that in the closing months of this memorable year the First Committee will continue to build upon this progress towards the realization of a safer world. I can assure the Committee that this is an endeavour to which Japan pledges its full support.

Before concluding, I am obliged to speak in response to the many unfounded accusations made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regarding Japan's defence posture. I regret to have to do this, but I will make only four points.

The first point is with regard to Japan's so-called attempts to become a military Power. I would like to state the following: Based on the concept of possessing a basic defence force rather than aiming at directly countering a military threat to the country, Japan is to possess the minimum necessary level of basic defence capability as an independent nation so that it will not become an unstable element in the region by creating a power vacuum. The Government of Japan is now striving for an effective and moderate defence build-up in accordance with this concept. While our main equipment should be basically replaced and modernized, we are making an even greater effort to seek efficiency and rationalization in terms of organization, force structure and equipment. But this posture will never pose a threat in the region.

On the second point regarding Japan-United States cooperation on defence matters, I would like to state the following: Japan-United States security arrangements are

intended to contribute to the security of Japan and to the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East. The recent developments in Japan-United States security relations, including the joint declaration of April this year, in no way change the structure of the Japan-United States security treaty or expand its geographical application. As the declaration says, we consider that the solid Japan-United States alliance and the United States military presence have contributed and will continue to contribute to stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region.

With regard to the third point on nuclear disarmament, I would like to emphasize that Japan is not currently developing and will never develop nuclear weapons. We have continually expressed our position on this issue. Japan will never possess nuclear weapons for several reasons. First, with regard to security, the possession of nuclear weapons would only destabilize the international environment around Japan. In this context, I note that our main purpose is to maintain peace and prosperity in Japan and throughout the world. Secondly, in respect of Japan's non-nuclear principles, both in policy and legally Japan excludes the option of nuclear weapons. In policy, Japan strictly upholds the three non-nuclear principles. Legally, both internationally and domestically, Japan is committed to legislation prohibiting nuclear weapons. Internationally, Japan is a State Party to the NPT, and domestically, Japan's Atomic Energy Basic Law restricts all nuclear activities to strictly peaceful purposes. Thirdly, Japan's national public sentiment is another important reason why it is totally unthinkable for Japan to shift its policy on nuclear weapons. The Japanese people, the only people in the world who have been the victims of atomic bombs, would be vehemently opposed to Japan possessing nuclear weapons.

The fourth and final point refers mainly to the last war. In this connection, I would like to state that last year, in commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war, the Government of Japan expressed deep remorse for the tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries caused by Japan's colonial rule and aggression. The Government of Japan continually endeavours to obtain other countries' understanding of Japan's recognition of history.

Mr. Valencia Rodríguez (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me to begin by extending to you, Sir, my delegation's warmest congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We wish you every success in your work. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau, as well as my profound gratitude to Ambassador Erdenechuluun for the intelligent way he guided the proceedings of the Committee at the last session.

During the past year, several important and promising events have taken place in connection with the disarmament process, although there have also been some setbacks. With this picture in mind, my delegation wishes to put on record its position regarding several among the many items that the Committee will have to deal with. They are as follows. First, during the various Rio Group summit meetings, our Heads of State or Government have recalled that the Latin American and Caribbean region was established as the first nuclear-weapon-free zone on the basis of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and reiterated the urgent need for the international community to prohibit forever the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as the need to eliminate nuclear arsenals, whose continued existence poses an imminent danger for humankind. Ecuador sees this as the only appropriate path if we are to achieve the objective for which the international community has been struggling, namely general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

In this regard, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which was opened for signature by the General Assembly, and which has been signed by the five nuclear Powers as well as by the overwhelming majority of other countries, including Ecuador, is an important step towards that objective. Although it is true that it leaves the door open for nuclear tests that do not involve explosions and might help qualitatively to improve and modernize nuclear weapons, the international community's acceptance of this instrument indicates that all countries will promote the disarmament process, will contribute to confidence-building among nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States, and will fundamentally strengthen declarations regarding moratoriums on testing and help avoid harm to the human race and the environment caused by nuclear tests. All of this makes it appropriate to examine with special care the prospect of this instrument entering into force and effectively opening the way to new achievements in this field.

An important complementary element to the Treaty should be the cessation of the production and stockpiling of fissionable material for nuclear weapons and other explosive nuclear devices. Ecuador is confident that there will soon be serious negotiations on this issue.

Second, Ecuador considers that this Committee must undertake an exhaustive study of the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in response to the request contained in resolution 49/75 K, and that, *inter alia*, the General Assembly should endorse the unanimous views of the Court criteria, in particular the view that:

> "There is in neither customary nor conventional international law any specific authorization of the threat or use of nuclear weapons" (*A/51/4, para. 182*).

This norm should serve as the basis for promoting the action needed to implement the

> "obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." (*Ibid.*)

This is an essential legal basis for the General Assembly to accelerate the process of nuclear disarmament and to strengthen the basic rules of international humanitarian law.

Thirdly, Ecuador has consistently emphasized the need for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. This is why we welcome the important Brazilian initiative to promote recognition of the fact that the Antarctic Treaty and the treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba are gradually converting the entire southern hemisphere and adjacent areas into nuclear-weapon-free regions. We appeal to the signatories of those instruments to adopt the necessary measures in order to consolidate the region as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Fourthly, Ecuador reiterates the importance of Security Council resolution 984 (1995), which takes note

> "of the statements made by each of the nuclear-weapon States ... in which they give security assurances against the use of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear-weapon States that are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons". *(resolution 984 (1995), para.1)*

We believe that this resolution is a measure which, *inter alia*, calls for serious negotiations on an international treaty that, while safeguarding the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of non-nuclear-weapon States, would make it a binding obligation for States to refrain from using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

Fifth, the Heads of State and Government of the Rio Group have also called repeatedly for a prompt prohibition of weapons of mass destruction, in particular chemical, bacteriological, toxin and radiological weapons.

The Chemical Weapons Convention soon enter into force; for this purpose, the ratification by just one State is required. Nonetheless, for the entry into force to be truly beneficial, all the States that possess this type of weapon should be parties to the instrument.

Ecuador subscribed to the Additional Protocol IV adopted in the first part of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, which prohibits the use and transfer of laser weapons that are specifically designed to cause permanent blindness. We consider that this instrument should be accepted by all States, because the danger of the dissemination and use of these weapons is immense, especially if they should fall into the hands of terrorist groups or drug traffickers.

Sixth, Ecuador wishes to reiterate once again that it believes that regional disarmament should be complemented by measures and initiatives for conventional disarmament at the global level, bearing in mind that it is the big Powers that have the greatest conventional military might in the world. Moreover, we must not forget the great imbalances in weaponry among States in the same region, which, far from promoting greater security for those who have the weapons, ends up accelerating the arms race and causing insecurity for all. Furthermore, these imbalances mean that countries possessing the greatest military forces spurn the peaceful settlement of disputes and rely only the use of force.

The Register of Conventional Arms is an appropriate measure aimed at bringing about transparency in the acquisition of military equipment. For it to be fully effective, it must be universally accepted. Ecuador is providing the information required under the Register.

Seventh, as regards the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive waste, I must state that Ecuador is a party to the 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal. In this context, the Ecuadorian Government has communicated to the secretariat of that Convention that, pursuant to article 4 of the Convention, it had decided

> "to prohibit completely the import of hazardous wastes or other wastes for disposal or processing",

and requested that that decision be reported to the all parties to the Convention.

Furthermore, Ecuador supports the conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of radiological weapons, which should include radioactive waste. In keeping with that position, we also support the preparation of strategies and measures aimed at reversing the effects of the deterioration of the environment.

Eighth, Ecuador supports the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. International events in recent years, including in the field of disarmament, show that there is a need to give decisive impetus to this entire process and, above all, to reach new commitments on the part of the States having the greatest responsibilities in this field.

We believe that, apart from the fundamental issue of nuclear disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, that special session should give particular attention to subjects related to conventional disarmament and, in particular, to the need for the international community to devote greater resources, released from the production and trafficking of weapons, to economic and social development.

Ninth, Ecuador believes that a fundamental aspect of promoting the disarmament process is confidence-building measures. There can be no doubt that every region has its own security characteristics. We must emphasize that the adoption of such measures and the creation of an environment of security, through, *inter alia*, the promotion of good-neighbourliness between States, constitutes an important contribution to transparency, mutual understanding and the strengthening of international relations. Bilateral and multilateral dialogue must be increased on the role of science and technology in the context of international security. Emphasis should be placed on the fact that the concept of security is not confined to military aspects alone but rather that it encompasses important political, social, economic and cultural aspects. Terrorism, drug trafficking, ethnic or religious confrontations, endemic underdevelopment and widespread poverty constantly conspire against security. Along the same lines, it is essential to settle international disputes exclusively by peaceful means so that agreements reached will be understandings based on justice and the law. As long as there is a climate of distrust and resentment stemming from the persistence of disputes among States, it will be very difficult to progress on the road towards disarmament.

Tenth, as regards the expansion of the composition of the Conference on Disarmament, while it is true that through decision CD/1406 that forum increased its membership to 61, with the admission of the so-called Group of 23, it is also true that many other States have been left out of the Conference, including Ecuador, which for some years now has been expressing its special interest in participating in the Conference. The Conference should reflect changes in the international situation, and it is therefore necessary for us to insist on this request, and we hope that it will receive a positive response from this Committee and, subsequently, from the Conference on Disarmament itself. In addition, it should be recalled that General Assembly resolution 50/72 C recognized the legitimate aspirations of all countries that have asked to be members of the Conference and urged that organ to re-examine the other candidatures that have been put forward through 1996.

Mr. Moher (Canada): Canada would like to join with others in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. We will work with you and with other members of the Bureau and of the Committee to make this session as positive as possible.

As we begin the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, Canada believes that we are at a critical point in international activities designed to promote arms control, disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We are on the divide: one direction points to the continuing exploitation of the opportunities afforded by the end of the cold war; the other to a loss of momentum and a risk of retrograde steps.

There is no doubt that we have a well-deserved right to take pride in our achievements over the past years. But along with the our important successes — the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) — there is also a lingering sense of promise unfulfilled, of unfinished business.

It is true that the advances of the past five years — START I, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the NPT extension, nuclear-weapon-free zones in the South Pacific and Africa, and the CTBT — have far exceeded those of

the past 50 years. At the same time, START II, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the CTBT are not yet in force and, to many countries, are less than perfect successes. More so than in past years, further progress on the non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament agendas seems a somewhat more remote prospect. Could it be that, through our own successes, we are moving beyond rhetorical objectives to challenge national security positions in a more direct manner? Can we continue to count on the post-cold-war and post-Gulf-war sense of commitment and urgency, and the political will that went with it? Canada believes that it is time to restore our energy, to reaffirm our commitments, and to look for leadership. With energy, commitment and leadership, we believe that much can be done.

Weapons of mass destruction remain what they have always been: weapons of mass destruction, whose use could only be contemplated in the most dire of circumstances. Ignoring the reality of their existence and the consequent need to reduce and eliminate the risks they pose is not an acceptable course of action. Our task is apparent: we must continue to reduce and eliminate these weapons.

In the nuclear field, START I, the NPT extension and the CTBT are insufficient in and of themselves. They are components of an ongoing dynamic and a progressive process as we move towards our declared goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. We must therefore press for continuous implementation of the START process, broadening it soon to include all nuclear-weapon States; we must begin work now on a fissile material cut-off convention, improve on existing nuclear security assurances, and build on and continue progress in the field of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

In pursuing these ends, other possibilities will emerge and should be pursued. But those I have mentioned can be pursued now, while resisting emerging efforts to redefine the conceptual playing field, as well as initiatives to set out unrealistic, ideological expectations and frameworks. In this regard, the strengthened, comprehensive and qualitatively different NPT review process scheduled to begin next spring naturally holds great importance for Canada, not least because of its relevance for the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency as outlined in the NPT Principles and Objectives. But other forums, including the Conference on Disarmament, must be as fully employed as possible.

Similarly, the challenges in the chemical and biological and toxin weapons fields are well known. The Chemical Weapons Convention must enter into force, with the United States of America and the Russian Federation living up to expectations and to their obligations. We know that this will require concerted political will being exercised by each of them — but it must be done. The Fourth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention this November will give us an immediate opportunity to take stock, assess the challenges and establish a clear objective for our ongoing work to strengthen the Convention. We must not forget that a cult was able to use toxin weapons; and what a cult can do, nation-States can easily exceed if not constrained by mutual commitments and assurances. Canada will do its best to contribute to further progress in all of these areas.

Our natural tendency to focus on highly visible objectives in the fields of weapons of mass destruction and conventional disarmament should not lead us to ignore other possibilities. For example, several Canadian Prime Ministers, beginning with Pierre Trudeau in 1982 at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, called for work to ban the development, testing and deployment of all weapons in space. Is this concept not worth further consideration? We believe that it is, and would like to see it pursued in the Conference on Disarmament.

Turning to conventional disarmament, we must ask ourselves another question: Where are we going and what are our objectives? Much good work has been done; many solid initiatives and exercises are under way. We should continue them while ensuring that we continue to set pragmatic, achievable and substantive objectives. Canada's perspective in that respect has long been governed by three considerations: transparency, dialogue and restraint. No one of these is viable by itself; each contributes to and depends upon the others. The end result must be tangible action. We can and should reinforce and enhance the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its regional counterparts; we must encourage dialogue on the basis of the data so generated; and we should promote further work on agreed frameworks for national restraint when and where appropriate. Canada considers that the proposed renewal of work on the Register of Conventional Arms and the greater ability of the Conference on Disarmament to devote energy to this field, building on work already done or under way, will give us an opportunity to focus and accelerate our common efforts.

This brings us to a vital and urgent issue: the achievement of a global ban on anti-personnel mines. In pursuing the objective of a global ban on anti-personnel

mines, Canada continues to attach great importance to the earliest possible ratification of amended Protocol II of the *Convention on Certain* Conventional Weapons by as many States as possible. Pending a truly global ban on these weapons, amended Protocol II is a vital element in the overall campaign to reduce and eliminate the suffering which they cause. Canada itself is pursuing on an urgent basis the legal and other steps necessary to enable the national ratification of this instrument.

However, Canada, along with many other States, continues to believe that more must be done. To this end, senior officials from 74 countries and numerous international organizations and non-governmental organizations attended the recent international strategy conference, "Towards a Global Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines", held at Ottawa, from 3 to 5 October. The 50 participating countries endorsed the Ottawa Declaration, calling for the earliest possible conclusion of a legally binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel mines. The conference also developed an action plan which outlines many concrete activities which States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations are willing to undertake to build the necessary political will to achieve a ban on anti-personnel mines. We shall request that these documents be circulated for the information of the Committee. It became clear over the course of the Ottawa conference that there was a critical mass of States willing to push forward now to conclude an international agreement to ban anti-personnel mines. Thus, in his closing speech, Canada's Foreign Minister, Lloyd Axworthy, challenged the international community to return to Canada by the end of 1997 to sign an international agreement banning anti-personnel mines, and pledged to work with other committed States to elaborate an anti-personnel mine ban text and to work with every like-minded State to bring it to fruition.

Many opponents of an immediate ban argue that anti-personnel mines are a security issue. Well, they are right. It is indeed a security issue: human security. And that security is shattered every 20 minutes, every day. The Ottawa conference demonstrated to us that there now exists the necessary momentum to put an end to this random and relentless evil. We are convinced that we need not and cannot wait for the ideal, a universal treaty, but should begin with a more limited membership. To capture all the States of the world is not realistic in the first instance. To capture the world's conscience is our goal. Our objective is a treaty which establishes the global norm against these hideous weapons: that the production, use, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel mines is to be banned forever. Several important and global arms control treaties started in such a limited way. Our ongoing challenge will be to make this treaty universal.

We believe that the establishment of December 1997 as a deadline for the conclusion of a treaty is both realistic and essential in terms of maintaining the unprecedented momentum for action. Such a treaty need not be complex. We must avoid the temptation to use as models treaties on strategic offensive weapons. This treaty must be fundamentally different, fundamentally simple. It is a treaty with both humanitarian and arms control objectives, about a weapon which is essentially defensive and whose use by one has little effect on the security of another.

We are pleased that Mr. Axworthy's initiative received the immediate support of the Secretary-General, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the hundreds of international and national non-governmental organizations represented at the conference. Canada is committed to the goal of a treaty to be signed by December 1997 and in force by the year 2000, and we are prepared to work with all other like-minded States to achieve that objective.

We have a straightforward choice. We can, as it has been put, "remove 110 million mines, an arm and a leg at a time", or we can act now. Canada has chosen to act. We invite all the countries of the United Nations to join with us in this effort so that when we return to this forum next year at this time, we will be moving to establish a new instrument for the protection of humanity.

In our work on the landmines issue, we have developed an extensive database on the national positions of Member States on the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of anti-personnel mines. We understand that no other solid source of information such as this exists at this time. We intend to circulate the database to all delegations in the coming weeks in order to validate the information contained in it. The database will be used as a tool to measure progress as we move towards a treaty, and eventually, as we move to implement the ban. We call for the cooperation of all Member States in this effort.

Canada also wishes to circulate to delegations a thought-provoking study which explores how verification information, training and analysis might be fused to facilitate decision-making and operational processes within the United Nations. The report focuses on ways in which the United Nations system, with its wide array of information sources, could better synthesize and analyse

this information in a timely and effective fashion to support the decision-making process. We hope that this innovative study stimulates thinking and debate on how we can better structure the United Nations to meet the challenges of the next century.

We have before us a readily discernible and attainable series of valid and valuable objectives. Our current security environment is positive. We can work together to achieve those objectives. To do so, two basic preconditions are essential. We must avoid self-satisfied "status quo-ism" on the one hand and the glitter of ideological crusades on the other. Giving in to these will only lead to sterile debate and a failure to progress.

Secondly, we must generate and maintain the political will necessary to confront and overcome the real challenges before us. Canada hopes that this First Committee session, the subsequent session of the Conference on Disarmament and the review processes of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, together with other exercises, will move us in the direction of the continuing exploration and exploitation of the discernable and achievable opportunities for substantial progress before us.

Mr. Campbell (Australia): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Australian delegation, I extend to you and to your fellow Bureau members congratulations on your election. We look forward to working closely with you to expedite the work of the Committee.

The past several years have seen significant advances in the discussion and negotiation of disarmament issues. Despite our many differences we, the international community, working together in the Conference on Disarmament, here in this Committee and in a number of other forums, have made quite extraordinary progress. The recent record speaks for itself: a Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) now close to entering into force; the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); and the successful conclusion and opening for signature of a Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which removes the contentious and long-running issue of nuclear-test explosions from our agenda. We have adopted a strengthened landmines Protocol to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects, and have commenced negotiations to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. In addition, the network of regional nuclear-weapon- free zones has been enhanced by the creation of new zones and the consolidation of existing ones.

Having recorded these significant achievements, the disarmament debate has now reached an important crossroads. Questions are being asked. Where do we go from here? What do we tackle next? How do we keep the momentum going? There are questions too about how to ensure that institutions and negotiating forums remain flexible and relevant. Perhaps most important of all, delegations are asking how the international community's interests and expectations with respect to the process of nuclear disarmament can be accommodated in the future disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

The answers to these questions should become clearer as we work through our agenda in the coming weeks. In my delegation's view, now is not the time to falter in the pursuit of a world free of weapons of mass destruction. Now is the time to capitalize further on the opportunities the ending of the cold war has presented us. Now is the time to build on recent achievements, to consolidate the institutions and instruments we have created, and to identify and move forward a new agenda, including new thinking on nuclear disarmament based on a realistic appraisal of what is practical and achievable.

There is no shortage of issues to address. The Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs outlined several of these in his statement before the General Assembly.

We need to work to make the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons realize its full potential, as envisaged in last year's decision on strengthening the review process for the Treaty.

We must make the most of the opportunity offered to us by the coming NPT review Preparatory Committee if we are to reap the disarmament and non-proliferation benefits of the Treaty's indefinite extension.

We need to strengthen International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards by adopting expeditiously the proposed 93-plus-2 protocol in a form that provides the Agency with a truly effective means of detecting undeclared nuclear activities.

We need to ensure that the CWC commences operation as an effective disarmament and non-proliferation

instrument, and to work for universal participation in the regime, including by the two possessor States.

We must reach early agreement on effective verification machinery for the Convention on biological weapons and must therefore allocate sufficient time and resources to these negotiations.

We need to start work on a convention to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. We also need to build on the commendable initiative of our Canadian friends to move forward in our efforts to negotiate a global ban on the production, stockpiling, transfer and use of anti-personnel landmines, so that the appalling misuse of this weapon is meaningfully and comprehensively addressed.

There is much important and valuable work to be done here, work for which future generations will thank us. It would be tragic if the frustrations we have all at times felt as we worked towards the milestones already achieved were to lead us to hold some or all of this agenda hostage to these frustrations.

It was clear from the consultations the outgoing President of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Meghlaoui, had with regional groups that much thought is being given to the future programme and orientation of the Conference on Disarmament. While we do not underestimate the difficulty in reconciling the spectrum of views in the Ambassador's thoughtful and reflective report, there is clearly a need to reform and update the agenda for the Conference on Disarmament to ensure its continuing relevance and effectiveness.

Perhaps an appropriate starting point in the area of nuclear disarmament would be the report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The report of the Commission, which we hope will be a valuable contribution to discussion and progress on these matters, recommends a political commitment by nuclear-weapon States to the elimination of nuclear weapons. It goes on to set out immediate and reinforcing steps towards that goal. It places a particular emphasis on the importance of effective verification in the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world and canvasses a possible role for the Conference on Disarmament in this area. We have been encouraged by the positive response the report has attracted from the international community.

The Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs has presented the report of the Commission to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the General Assembly. It will be introduced to the Conference on Disarmament at its first session in 1997.

It is not my intention to further take up the Committee's time outlining Australia's position on the many issues on our agenda. We will have ample opportunity to do so in the weeks ahead. Rather, I would conclude my remarks by appealing to delegations to work together in a spirit of cooperation and with a sense of common purpose to continue to build on the progress we have already made.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. I am confident that your extensive experience will enable you to guide our efforts to a successful conclusion this year, and I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I also wish to express our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Erdenechuluun, for his able guidance of the work of this Committee during the fiftieth session.

This Committee is meeting today in a global climate of change and momentous political developments and events. We should use this climate to promote multilateral disarmament negotiations and an international awareness of the need to pursue sincere efforts, on both the global and regional levels, to achieve general and complete disarmament. I need not at this stage reiterate Egypt's priorities in the field of disarmament. These priorities are fully consistent with the outline and details of the priorities stated in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which was held in 1978. In that document, nuclear disarmament was accorded the highest possible priority, without prejudice to the importance of other questions of non-proliferation and conventional disarmament, which occupy a lower rank in disarmament priorities.

I should like to begin by referring to the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, which was delivered on 8 July 1996. This opinion unanimously recognized that

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." *(A/51/4, para. 182)*

This advisory opinion demonstrates the conviction of the highest international judicial authority of the need to pursue nuclear disarmament in all its aspects. In this vein, Egypt, as coordinator of the Group of 21 in the Conference on Disarmament, submitted last August, on behalf of 28 of the Conference members, the programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons (CD/1419). We believe that this programme of work will make up for the lack of strong and explicit commitments relating to nuclear disarmament, especially on the part of the nuclear-weapon States. We also believe that this programme should be studied seriously in the Conference on Disarmament's Ad Hoc Committee on Nuclear Disarmament. In resolution 50/70P, the General Assembly called on the Conference on Disarmament to establish that Ad Hoc Committee, on a priority basis, to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework.

In this same context, I cannot fail to refer to the adoption of resolution 1996/14, dated 23 August 1996, by the Commission on Human Rights' Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, which affirms in its operative paragraphs that weapons of mass destruction and in particular nuclear weapons should have no role to play in international relations and thus should be eliminated. It further recommends that the relevant international forums, in particular the Conference on Disarmament, should immediately start negotiations on nuclear disarmament to reduce nuclear weapons globally within a phased programme, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons, thus contributing to the enhancement of international peace and security and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and above all the right to life.

The immense destructiveness of nuclear weapons was made clear in the message of warning issued in the August 1996 report of the Canberra Commission. Its thrust is that the doctrine of nuclear deterrence is militarily redundant and dangerous. The report stated:

(spoke in English)

> "A central reality is that nuclear weapons diminish the security of all States. Indeed, States which possess them become themselves targets of nuclear weapons. The opportunity now exists, perhaps without precedent or recurrence, to make a new and clear choice to enable the world to conduct its affairs without nuclear weapons. A nuclear-weapon-free world can be secured and maintained through political commitment, and anchored in an enduring and binding legal framework."

(spoke in Arabic)

I should like to welcome the findings of the report of the Commission, of which I have the honour to be a member, and to thank the Government of Australia for sponsoring this initiative. I also wish to express our desire for serious consideration of the practical steps referred to therein.

All these resolutions, provisions and opinions reaffirm once again the clear resolve of the international community to pursue nuclear disarmament. It is therefore incumbent upon us to continue to give impetus to efforts aimed at achieving the universality of all international instruments relating to disarmament. In this regard, special attention should be accorded to achieving the universality of the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime: the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In this respect, we must refer to article VI of the Treaty, which imposes an obligation on all its parties to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

In this light, we regard the commencement of the work of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference, to be held in the year 2000, as an important phase. The Committee's efforts should be directed towards the issuing by the Review Conference of an integral consensus document instead of — as in most previous Review Conferences — merely issuing non-substantive declarations that only make clear the failure to reach general agreement on non-proliferation policies and on their relation to the priorities of disarmament. That endeavour should be coupled with the drafting of an international treaty on comprehensive security assurances from nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States. As has been stated by many countries, including Egypt, relying on a Security Council resolution based on unilateral declarations from nuclear-weapon States is not sufficient, especially in the light of the indefinite extension of the NPT last year, which gave it special and significant international status.

Egypt welcomed the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the Conference on Disarmament. In spite of the Treaty's shortcomings, which cast a shadow over its true comprehensiveness, we still

consider it a step — though a limited one — in the right direction. It should be followed by additional steps towards the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament. Accordingly, at the resumed session of the General Assembly, Egypt voted in favor of resolution 50/245, adopting the Treaty and opening it for signature. Egypt signed the Treaty yesterday.

However, I should like to register here our discontent with the procedure by which the Treaty was brought from the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly. This procedure must not set a precedent. Equally, I should like to underscore the important role of the consensus basis on which the Conference on Disarmament — the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body — functions and takes its decisions.

Now that the Conference on Disarmament has finished its work on the CTBT, the next priority on its agenda must be the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement banning the production of fissile material for weapons purposes. For our work in this regard to be of any relevance, it must serve to prevent both vertical and horizontal proliferation of these materials and must lead to tangible results. This dual objective cannot be achieved unless the existing stockpiles of weapon-grade fissile materials are given due consideration as an integral part of the negotiating process. Egypt believes that this matter is of great importance.

Egypt also believes in the great importance of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the globe. The concept in itself represents a useful tool for the promotion of the non-proliferation regime within the framework of article VII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It is in this vein that we welcomed, and participated in, the tireless African efforts that culminated in the Treaty of Pelindaba, signed by the African States in Cairo which established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, and the adoption of the Cairo Declaration of last April, which reflected a number of African positions that bring the world one step closer to the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Regrettably, the Middle East lags far behind Africa in this regard, despite the repeated calls and resolutions for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. These began here in the First Committee in 1974, and the General Assembly has been adopting resolutions to this effect unanimously since 1980. Unfortunately, these resolutions have not yet been translated into reality. In this regard, we note the importance of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. I should like to reaffirm here that the mere adoption of this resolution was never an end in itself; what is required is its implementation. In this regard, the three nuclear-weapon States that cosponsored the resolution have a special responsibility.

These repeated resolutions, adopted over a period of more than 20 years, reflect the international community's concern at the existence in Israel of an advanced nuclear programme, that is not governed by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. We cannot afford any ambiguity in this regard, and we once again call on Israel, the only State in the Middle East that possesses nuclear facilities not governed by IAEA safeguards, to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear facilities under the full-scope safeguards system of the IAEA. In this regard, Egypt welcomes the decisions of Djibouti and the United Arab Emirates to accede to the NPT. We also welcome the statement made before the General Assembly last month by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Oman on his country's decision to sign the Treaty. That signature would leave Israel as the only State — I repeat, the only State — in the region not to have acceded to the NPT despite its advanced nuclear capabilities, which are well known to the whole world.

We will continue to strive towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East within the framework of the broader initiative launched by President Mubarak in April 1990 calling for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from all nuclear weapons.

I now turn to the question of landmines, another priority on Egypt's disarmament agenda. Egypt is one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. More than 22 million landmines have been planted in its soil by regional and extra-regional belligerents during the various international and regional conflicts that have taken place on Egypt's territory. In this light, I should like to register Egypt's position that the approach to the landmine problem must be comprehensive and all-encompassing. Measures to ban mines should be accompanied by serious and concrete steps geared towards clearing existing mines from affected countries. Countries that are unable to deal with this problem on their own must be provided with technical and financial aid, and the necessary advanced technology to enable them to overcome this tragic legacy must be transferred to them. It is useful here to refer to the Final Document of the Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects,

held in Geneva last May, which incorporated a paragraph on the role of States involved in the deployment of mines in the process of their clearance:

(spoke in English)

> "Recognizing the important role that the international community, particularly States involved in the deployment of mines, can play in assisting in mine clearance in affected countries through the provision of necessary maps and information and appropriate technical and material assistance to remove or otherwise render ineffective existing minefields, mines and booby-traps". *(CCW/Conf.I/16, annex C, p. 43)*

(spoke in Arabic)

One way to enhance and promote disarmament efforts is to convene the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The delegation of Egypt believes that the General Assembly should agree, during its current session, on a specific date for the convening of that special session, at which point we could begin carefully preparing to formulate its agenda. In this regard, the convening of that session in 1998, or 1999 at the latest, would serve as a useful catalyst for the NPT Review Conference in the year 2000.

In conclusion, I should like to stress the importance of the continued efforts of the United Nations system in the field of disarmament. This collective endeavour must strive to achieve optimum coordination between the work of the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, with a view to achieving complementarity in international towards general and complete disarmament.

In the light of past experiences, we call upon all States Members of the United Nations to cooperate in good faith in the implementation of all resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in respect to international legitimacy.

Mr. Hofer (Switzerland)(*interpretation from French*): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee and to assure you of my delegation's support during your mandate. Your accession to that high post is indeed fortunate, for you come from a region which, in the years to come, will be playing an important role in international security.

In taking stock of recent events in the sphere of security policy since the previous session of the General Assembly, my delegation notes with satisfaction that the process of transition towards a multipolar world is being accelerated by the integration of States into an ever-closer network of interdependence. One of the effects of this development is an intensification of multilateral dialogue. I note in this connection the recent expansion, on the institutional level, of the Conference on Disarmament to 61 members. Here, I should like to pay tribute to the representatives of South Africa, whose perseverance, flexibility and skill have contributed to this auspicious development.

Other successes have been achieved in the sphere of arms control and disarmament, such as progress towards the ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, the continuation of negotiations on the establishment of a verification system in the area of biological weapons and the adoption of an improved Protocol on anti-personnel landmines.

These developments cannot conceal a negative corollary of movement towards a multipolar world. The greater freedom of action enjoyed by international protagonists — be they States or otherwise — is fraught with additional risks of insecurity. These may emerge from conflicts that had been masked by the previous balance. These new dangers, often rooted in the past, are of all the more concern because they may feed the illusion that easy solutions can be found in the use of force. Thus the progress made in the past 12 months, although impressive, is still not enough.

In this general debate I should like to take up two principal subjects: the future of nuclear disarmament and the ban on anti-personnel landmines, a subject to which the Swiss delegation will return in a separate statement.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, Switzerland's policy on this question is as follows. In general, my Government does not view disarmament as an abstract goal in and of itself, but rather as a means of consolidating international security. That goal can be achieved through the gradual establishment of a stable balance at an ever-lower level while attempting to achieve, as a final stage, the complete and universal dismantling of nuclear weapons.

The international community has adopted a Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Notwithstanding its shortcomings, that Treaty must be

regarded as a significant advance in global arms control, thus serving the goals pursued by my Government. Therefore, on 24 September of this year Switzerland signed the Treaty. By so doing the Swiss authorities expressed their firm hope that, despite the uncertainty surrounding its entry into force, the Treaty's adoption by the General Assembly signifies the end of all nuclear testing, whatever its nature or form.

With this Treaty we find ourselves at the end of one cycle of negotiations and at the beginning of a political process whose final objective is the universal ban on nuclear tests. However, we cannot in the long run be satisfied by a purely formal measure. For that reason, the Swiss authorities intend to participate fully in the work of the Preparatory Committee that has been mandated to establish a monitoring body for that Treaty.

The CTBT's limits reveal the need to pursue international efforts in the area of nuclear disarmament while respecting the criteria for security and stability. In this connection, we feel that we must resolutely devote ourselves to the implementation of the disarmament commitments undertaken with the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Here, Switzerland will join in the preparations for the Review Conference of that Treaty, which are getting under way this week in New York.

At the same time, the impetus created by the CTBT must be maintained. Within the Conference on Disarmament the logical consequence will be the opening of negotiations on a convention on the halt of the production of fissionable material for military purposes, known as the cut-off treaty.

The Swiss authorities are also following with interest all initiatives that can serve the goal of a safer world in which the possession of nuclear weapons will no longer be necessary. The recent progress made with the extension of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa, South-East Asia and in the South Pacific is encouraging. The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996 on the illegality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, as well as proposals for the elimination of nuclear weapons made by the Canberra Commission, are other examples.

There are other means of mass destruction. Regarding the ban on chemical weapons, we welcome the imminent entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. This will represent a significant step towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. We do regret, however, that the two States that have acknowledged the possession of chemical weapons have not yet been able to ratify the Convention. Switzerland appeals for the ratification of this Convention by all States that have not yet done so.

The same holds true with regard to negotiations on biological weapons. The results achieved so far are too meagre. Thus, the Swiss authorities hope that the Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, which will be held at Geneva in November of this year, will provide a new impetus to that process.

In addition to the destructive potential of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, conventional weapons too create security problems. Here as well, the need to remedy the causes of conflicts and tensions remains primary. In the context of conventional weapons, one question to which we should devote our full attention is that of anti-personnel mines. Year after year, several thousand persons fall victim to these weapons or continue to be threatened by them, often long after conflicts have ended. Such a situation is intolerable. Only the unshakable political will of States to make rapid and substantial progress towards a total ban on anti-personnel mines and the establishment of real international coordination in the area of demining can put an end to the situation as it exists today.

Protocol II of the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects, which deals with mines, has just been amended. The improvements made to the original text, though modest, are a step in the right direction. Thus, the Swiss Government hopes that the amended Protocol II will soon enter into force. In the view of my authorities, only a total ban on anti-personnel mines will enable us to overcome their devastating effect. The campaign for a total ban on anti-personnel mines must continue and be intensified. The Swiss Government will therefore join in any reasonable initiative aimed at such a ban, in keeping with the humanitarian goals of its foreign policy. Such an initiative was undertaken by the 50 States whose representatives met at Ottawa from 3 to 5 October of this year. At that meeting, the opinion was expressed that States favouring a total ban on anti-personnel mines must undertake without further delay to draw up the text of a convention on such a ban. The Swiss Government fully shares that opinion and will do all it can to ensure that it becomes fact.

Until such a treaty can be broadly ratified, it is important that States take action. The Swiss Government did so in November 1995, when it unilaterally and unconditionally renounced the use, manufacture, laying and transfer of anti-personnel mines.

Even were the international community able to take the courageous step of imposing a ban on anti-personnel mines, it would not have solved the problems created by the some 110 million landmines that are implanted throughout the world and that threaten the lives and physical safety of tens of thousands of innocent persons. In this context, demining assistance in the context of peacekeeping operations must be made a priority element of international cooperation. The responsibility of the United Nations within the framework of the maintenance of peace and international security makes it a natural candidate to coordinate such an undertaking. The Organization, however, will be able to carry out that mandate only when the international community decides to accord to demining assistance the global dimension it has hitherto lacked. Here, the debate on demining in the context of United Nations peacekeeping operations held by the Security Council on 15 August 1996 and the presidential statement of 30 August 1996 are encouraging signs.

In this connection, the Swiss Government will strengthen its contribution to the international demining assistance effort.

In conclusion, I should like to hail the crucial role being played by the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament in promoting international cooperation in the sphere of security policy and to reiterate Switzerland's determination to continue, insofar as it is able, to participate in those activities.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): Mr. Chairman, I would like to extend to you our congratulations on your election to preside over the First Committee. We are pleased to see the representative of neighbourly Belarus in that position of high responsibility. I also take this opportunity to add my congratulations to all the other officers of the Committee.

As a State that has proved by practical steps its desire to see the world free of nuclear weapons, Ukraine noted with satisfaction the fact that at its fiftieth session, on 10 September 1996, the General Assembly adopted resolution 50/245, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty" (CTBT). Our State was one of the many sponsors of that historic resolution. The excellent results of the vote constituted convincing evidence of the ability of the world community, at what can be called without exaggeration a historical juncture, to put aside its differences with regard to so basic a treaty as the CTBT and to reach agreement on one idea: to ban all tests in all spheres, and to set up a reliable non-discriminatory regime to monitor the implementation of the Treaty provisions.

However, we will soon have to emerge from this justified state of euphoria that has followed on the adoption of the resolution, for serious obstacles stand in the way of the Treaty's entry into force, obstacles similar to those that prevented approval of its draft version at the Conference on Disarmament.

We feel it necessary to emphasize that Ukraine views the CTBT as an international legal instrument that consolidates the end of the nuclear-arms race, hampers the so-called vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons and creates important and necessary prerequisites that add dynamism to the process of nuclear disarmament.

In this connection we would like to remind delegations that the processes of nuclear disarmament are developing before our very eyes and that in Ukraine that process was brought to its natural completion on 1 June 1996, an event that was solemnly announced by Leonid Kuchma, the President of our State. Therefore, assessments of the CTBT as the first step on the way towards nuclear disarmament and as purely a disarmament instrument sound somewhat strange to us.

In the meantime, the Treaty does not, for example, envisage the elimination of testing grounds, specialized scientific research laboratories or other infrastructures related to nuclear weapons. That is why we would also like to see the world community view the CTBT not as just another instrument in the field of nuclear disarmament but as one that creates preconditions for the realization of nuclear disarmament on a global scale.

An understanding of the role of the CTBT in the context of international law will help us to avoid excessive expectations for the CTBT and too many reservations with regard to its present language, which in turn will allow the world community to focus all its attention and efforts on the solution of the truly fundamental goal of the day, namely the elaboration of a global programme of stage-by-stage nuclear disarmament. Ukraine is among the countries calling for a serious approach to the solution of that priority objective. In this connection, I would remind delegations that in his statement at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, on 22 October 1995, our President put forward

the idea of elaborating within the United Nations a programme of complete nuclear disarmament.

The establishment of an ad hoc committee on this matter within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament could be a practical step towards the implementation of that idea. Goal-oriented and productive work by the Conference on Disarmament in this connection would be the best way to change the attitude of the opponents of the CTBT and would encourage the process of its signature, ratification and subsequent entry into force. That in turn would bring us closer to our common goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

In this context, we believe that the process of nuclear disarmament should be made more dynamic. The initiative put forward by the President of Ukraine with regard to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe between the Baltic and the Black Seas is a logical step and an important move in the right direction. We believe that support for the idea of a non-nuclear Central Europe would promote an atmosphere of confidence between and among the States of the region and would prevent the emergence of new lines of division on the European continent. The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe in addition to the zones existing in the regions of Antarctica, the South Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the nuclear-weapon-free zones in South-East Asia and Africa, would create the critical mass that could foster the process of global nuclear disarmament.

It would be fair to describe this year as crucial in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. On 17 June it adopted a long-awaited, historic decision on expanding the membership of that multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament and arms control. On behalf of Ukraine, a State that has become a full-fledged participant in the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to express gratitude to the delegations of the States that supported the desire of other countries, in particular my own, to influence the process of formulating agreements in such vital spheres as international security and disarmament. I am confident that the appearance of new full-fledged participants in the negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament will stimulate more active work in other Ad Hoc Committees besides the Ad Hoc Test-Ban Committee. For Ukraine, these are the Ad Hoc Committees on the elaboration of a convention on the elaboration of a convention on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for military purposes, and on the elaboration of a multilateral agreement on security guarantees by nuclear States to non-nuclear-States, and the elaboration of a programme of global nuclear disarmament.

Ukraine supports the adoption by the First Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects of the amended version of Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices, which introduces prohibitions and stricter restrictions on the use of certain types of anti-personnel landmines, which have been called "weapons of mass destruction in slow motion".

The world community has many, and quite reasonable complaints with regard to the substance of the adopted document, since it does not create the required preconditions for overcoming the consequences of the humanitarian crisis a number of States are experiencing as a result of the broad-scale and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. It is evident that the introduction of a comprehensive prohibition of anti-personnel landmines is the very thing needed to solve the problems caused by the use of such conventional weapons. However, taking into account the present reality that many countries are not ready to review the role of anti-personnel landmines in their defence doctrines, it is expedient to work out a reliable international regime that would exclude the possibility of such mines being transferred to States whose populations have suffered from their use.

As for Ukraine, it neither produces nor exports anti-personnel landmines. We strictly observe the provisions of the moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines of all kinds announced by our country on 1 September 1995. At the same time, Ukraine would support considering the issue of the prohibition of anti-personnel landmines within the relevant Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament.

At present, it is more than obvious that we need radically to change our approach to a solution to the problem of mine clearance. It is well known that each year in mine-clearance operations carried out under United Nations auspices a mere 100,000 anti-personnel landmines are discovered and deactivated, whereas, according to various estimates, two million to five million such landmines are placed. In addition, the clearance of one anti-personnel landmine costs $1,000, while its production costs only three dollars.

In this connection, Ukraine considers that mine-clearance operations in a given country are worthwhile only if a solid barrier can be erected against the delivery of landmines to the parties to the conflict in that country. Ideally, such operations should be conducted when the armed conflict has ceased and its causes have been dealt with by political means. In addition, the world community should immediately elaborate and begin to apply qualitatively new techniques of mine clearance, which could reduce by several increments the costs of clearing one mine, reduce the risks to human life and to the health of personnel, and lead to an acceleration of the mine-clearing process.

For its part, Ukraine is ready to dispatch special units of its military forces for demining operations under the auspices of the United Nations and other international organizations, and on a bilateral basis. These units will be able to take part in mine clearance only if the interested party will pay servicemen's salaries, cover their transportation costs and undertake to provide compensation in the event of a serviceman being injured or losing his life. However, even today, a Ukrainian bridging company is discharging its duty in the United Nations peacekeeping force in Angola, where the situation is extremely difficult because of the many landmines that force our servicemen to conduct simultaneous mine clearance operations. Ukrainian engineering units are also engaged in mine clearance in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. We have a centre for training mine clearance experts in the Ukrainian city of Kamenets Podolskiy, which has all the facilities needed for training foreign experts in this field.

Ukraine has always considered the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction as an important international instrument in the field of chemical disarmament. This a view reflects our wish that the Convention should be ratified by the United States and Russia, which have the largest part of the world's stockpiles of chemical weapons, before it enters into force. In our view, if the Chemical Weapons Convention were to enter into force before its ratification by those noted countries, it would lessen the practical importance of the Convention. However, we would not like the world community to consider the Convention as an instrument for the non-proliferation of chemical weapons, but rather as an instrument for their elimination.

At the national level, Ukraine is taking measures aimed at preparing Convention provisions for implementation by chemical enterprises, and is undertaking operations to find and identify the chemical weapons that were stored on its territory in previous years.

We are pinning great hopes on the Fourth Review Conference of Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, scheduled for the end of this year. Strengthening the Convention by establishing an international regime for monitoring observance of its provisions would be a proper step to stop possible attempts to gain possession of such "weapons of mass destruction for the poor", which would have a destabilizing impact on international security as a whole.

Among the first priorities of the international community in the field of maintaining peace and strengthening stability and security both at the regional and at global levels, is continued attention to the control and reduction of conventional armaments, the huge arsenals of which endanger the very existence of humankind. From this point of view, the decisions taken by the First Review Conference on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) are of great importance, in particular with regard to the need to keep this Treaty in operation as a vital mechanism ensuring arms control, and to adapt it to the new geopolitical situation. That would make it possible to improve the effectiveness of relevant measures and to rely on the Treaty in future arms control negotiations within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the conceptual basis of which is scheduled to be approved prior to the OSCE meeting at Lisbon.

Ukraine welcomes the efforts undertaken by States parties to the CFE Treaty aimed at solving the problems that have arisen in the course of its implementation, in particular the problem of the limitation of arms and equipment in the flank region. However, we feel some concern at efforts aimed at resolving this problem at any cost, even when it involves the security interests of individual States. Ukraine believes that it is absolutely necessary strictly to observe the principle of equal security for all States parties, with due account of the will and sovereignty of individual States on issues relating to the deployment of foreign troops on their territories.

There is one more problem on which I would like to outline the position of Ukraine. It concerns our country's participation in the non-proliferation regimes covering dual-purpose high technologies intended for double purposes. Recent achievements in science and technology play a decisive role in the contemporary development of society.

It is no secret to anyone that the most developed technologies, first of all in the missile and space industry and nuclear energy, as well as achievements in biology and chemistry, are closely linked to the military field, in particular because of the possibility of using them for the development of weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, scientific progress can serve as one of the decisive factors in both strengthening and destabilizing international security.

Taking this into account, I would like to underline that the creation of an effective export control system in our country and the establishment of comprehensive cooperation with other States in the field of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of facilities for their supply constitute one of the most important aspects of Ukraine's foreign policy in the field of arms control and disarmament. It is from this perspective that we view our fully fledged participation in such influential international export control regimes as the Nuclear Suppliers' Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement. Ukraine is also striving to participate in multilateral measures in the field of technology non-proliferation. That is why one of our priorities is to secure fully fledged membership in the Missile Technology Control Regime.

At the same time, we believe that any multilateral measures in the field of non-proliferation should neither prevent international cooperation in the development of high technologies nor contradict legitimate self-defence purposes in accordance with the norms of international law.

To better evaluate and forecast the influence of science and technology on international security, we consider it expedient to expand the exchange of experience and information between States in this sphere, while unquestionably preserving the right to the protection of information. In this context, we support the idea of creating a system of criteria for the assessment of technologies.

These are only a few of the important issues which my delegation wanted to raise in the general exchange of views in the First Committee. We are looking forward to elaborating on these and other important problems during the informal discussion which, in the opinion of my delegation, will enhance understanding of our respective positions and thereby help ensure that the work of this Committee is constructive and efficient.

Mr. García (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are certain that under your guidance our deliberations will have positive results. Please be assured of the constant cooperation of my delegation towards that end. My delegation also wishes to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Among the striking events of the past year that relate to the work of this Committee, we should underscore, *inter alia*, the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Africa and in South-East Asia — which have joined existing zones in other parts of the world.

My country is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Antarctic Treaty. We have been committed to the cause of disarmament for many years, and for this reason we attach enormous importance to the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We are convinced that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty marks a significant step in the field of non-proliferation and in the framework of the disarmament process. It is for this reason that Colombia signed it.

Since it is not acceptable for any group of countries to assume a natural and eternal right to posses nuclear weapons, and since we envisage the possibility of a world free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, we invite the nuclear-weapon States to take additional steps and to begin firm negotiations with a view to the elimination of nuclear weapons within an established time-frame. In this respect we completely support what was stated by the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, who met at Cartagena in October 1995. At that meeting they reaffirmed that for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to make sense as a disarmament treaty, it must be considered as an important step towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons by a specific time.

As was affirmed by Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Non-Aligned Movement at their meeting in New York on 25 September of this year,

> "In the post-cold-war era there is no justification — if ever there was one — to maintain nuclear arsenals, and much less to create new ones, in pursuit of the arms race. The time has come to destroy all reserves of these deadly weapons of mass

destruction once and for all. The non-proliferation regime will not be successful if there is not a clear prospect for nuclear disarmament."

In this connection the Foreign Ministers and Heads of Delegation emphasized,

"once again the need for the Conference on Disarmament to establish on a priority basis an ad hoc committee to begin negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and for the elimination of nuclear weapons within an established time-frame."

It is precisely the conviction that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons must be accomplished within a specific time-frame that led us to support the proposed programme of action for nuclear disarmament in accordance with the criteria outlined by the Group of 21 within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

The International Court of Justice made a positive contribution to the cause of peace when it unanimously affirmed the obligation to conduct in good faith and conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control under the terms of Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in its Advisory Opinion of 8 July 1996 on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons.

It should be emphasized that in its ruling the Court specifically stated that,

"The legal import of that obligation goes beyond that of a mere obligation of conduct; the obligation involved here is an obligation to achieve a precise result — nuclear disarmament in all its aspects — by adopting a particular course of conduct, namely, the pursuit of negotiations on the matter in good faith." *(para. 99)*

The Court added that,

"This twofold obligation to pursue and to conclude negotiations formally concerns the 182 States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or, in other words, the vast majority of the international community." *(para. 100)*

My country has actively participated in the process of strengthening the Treaty of Tlatelolco, a pioneering instrument in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We will continue to support the strengthening of the regime established under that Treaty. It is gratifying to note that the number of States of the region that are parties to the Treaty today has increased to 31.

The Treaty of Pelindaba was signed last April, establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. This instrument and the Treaty signed in December of 1995 establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia, has joined the Antarctic, Tlatelolco, and Rarotonga Treaties in bringing us closer to the establishment of the southern hemisphere as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

My delegation wishes to emphasize that at the Non-Aligned Movement summit last year, the Heads of State or Government encouraged the unification of the nuclear-weapon-free zones already established with those that are now being finalized. In this connection my delegation commends the initiative by Brazil with a view to the consolidation of the southern hemisphere as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

It is disturbing that the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction has not entered into force or been ratified this year by those States that have acknowledged themselves to be the largest possessors of these weapons. After two decades of negotiations, and at a time when there is full awareness in the international community of the need for this instrument to enter into force permanently and universally, we cannot fail to call once again upon the States that possess these weapons to ratify the Convention. With 64 out of the 65 ratifications necessary for the Convention's entry into force having been obtained, it is increasingly important that the Convention be ratified as soon as possible by the main possessors of these weapons.

The subject of conventional weapons, and particularly the illicit traffic in those weapons, is among the matters that deserve special attention. My delegation shares the concern about the vast resources that continue to be devoted to the acquisition of weaponry and about the unbridled increase in the illicit traffic in weapons, munitions and explosives. My delegation welcomes the consensus adopted at the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission of the document entitled "Guidelines for international arms transfers in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 A of 6 December 1991".

Anti-personnel landmines represent a grave threat to the peace, security and safety of millions of persons from all parts of the world. What for a few is one more export item, a mere statistic, is for hundreds of thousands of persons, many of them children, a tangible cause of disability or death. My country resolutely supports the prohibition of the production, use, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel landmines, and the immediate initiation of negotiations with a view to an international agreement for this purpose.

My delegation supports the holding of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We are convinced that a special session is the appropriate forum to analyze the future course of action in respect of disarmament, arms control and other issues related to international security. We are convinced of the importance of multilateralism in the disarmament process and of the need to insure the full participation of all the members of the international community in the preparation and holding of a fourth special session devoted to disarmament. We are prepared to contribute to reaching the necessary agreements with a view to holding the session before the end of this century. We therefore consider it essential that the preparatory process for the fourth special session start at the beginning of 1997.

Mr. Bergh (South Africa): Please accept my delegations's congratulations, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee of the General Assembly during the fifty-first session. Nineteen ninety-six has been a year in which we have seen many accomplishments in the area of disarmament, but many important and significant tasks remain ahead of us. I wish to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you lead the work of this Committee to a successful conclusion.

South Africa remains committed to achieving a world free of all weapons of mass destruction and to addressing the proliferation of conventional weapons. Of major significance during the last year has been the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva; the adoption of the Treaty by the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly; and the Treaty signing ceremony in New York, which represented the culmination of a long-sought-after goal in nuclear disarmament. The CTBT is a major accomplishment in the field of nuclear disarmament. However, for its implications to be fully realized, the continued commitment of all States — especially the nuclear-weapon States — to nuclear disarmament and to creating a positive climate will be essential.

Our position on the CTBT as an instrument of disarmament and non-proliferation is reinforced by our view that the CTBT is an integral part of a programme of action which will lead to the full implementation of the Article-VI nuclear disarmament obligations of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Paragraph 4 of Decision 2 of the "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" of Part I of the Final Document of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons identifies the initial elements of such a programme of action for nuclear disarmament. These are: the completion of the negotiations no later than 1996, a goal which has already been accomplished; the immediate commencement and early conclusion of work on a convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, the so-called cut-off convention; and the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons, and by all States of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

The "Principles and objectives" also cover other elements important to the nuclear disarmament agenda, namely the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the need to address the issue of security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT.

In this regard I also wish to recall that in the memorandum of cooperation on disarmament and arms control which was signed between President Nelson Mandela and New Zealand Prime Minister, Mr. James Bolger, on 8 August 1996, it was confirmed that our Governments will work for the commencement next year of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

However, further steps are needed in the programme to bring the world closer to the ultimate goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. We note that all parties to the NPT have committed themselves to that goal, a commitment which was explicitly recognized in the recent advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons.

In that context, the process of reviewing the NPT, which will commence next year, provides a means for promoting the full implementation of the Treaty and the "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament". However, the agreements which were achieved at the NPT Review and Extension Conference provide for a dynamic process which will add to the programme of action as issues are dealt with and removed from the agenda. For us to achieve this goal of a world free of nuclear weapons we need to demonstrate our sincerity with tangible actions.

This year, 1996, has also seen much work — ranging from the report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons to the programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons — in defining the path ahead for nuclear disarmament. In this regard, South Africa fully supports the proposal to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, as the venue where much of this work can be focused.

However, care should be taken in our approach to nuclear disarmament so as to maximize the progress which can and must be made. While there might be the temptation to link progress on certain subjects to others, the dire consequence of such a course of action might be to block progress on all fronts.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the world is a clear demonstration of the continued commitment of non-nuclear-weapon States to the goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons. From South Africa's point of view, therefore, one of the most significant events since the last First Committee session has been the signing of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty — the Treaty of Pelindaba — in Cairo on 11 April 1996. We are particularly pleased that four of the nuclear-weapon States signed the Protocol to the Treaty simultaneously with African States at Cairo, while the fifth State has indicated that it will do so in the near future. The signing of the Treaty of Pelindaba is another milestone along this road, as is the conclusion in Bangkok of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, and the signing of the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga by France, the United Kingdom and the United States.

My delegation believes that the Treaty of Pelindaba reflects the combined ideal of African countries to see our continent free of nuclear weapons, and that it represents an achievement of which we can all rightfully be proud. Following the signing of the Treaty of Pelindaba by the South African Minister for Foreign Affair in Cairo, we are currently in the process of obtaining parliamentary ratification of the Treaty, to be followed by the deposit of our instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity.

It is our conviction that the Treaty of Pelindaba will serve to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime and encourage the establishment of additional nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts of the world. In this regard, South Africa supports initiatives to promote the southern hemisphere as a zone free from nuclear weapons. With the addition of Antarctica, such a zone will cover more than 50 per cent of the Earth's landmass.

With regard to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, South Africa is pleased with the progress which has been made in the area of ratifications. With 64 States currently having ratified it, and only one more to go before the trigger point for entry into force of the Convention is reached, we are pleased that the efforts of delegations in The Hague will soon be translated into action. It must be mentioned, however, that there are a number of substantive issues still outstanding with regard to the Convention, and South Africa would urge all delegations participating in the discussions in this regard to show the maximum possible flexibility in order to ensure that the second phase of the Convention — entry into force — can proceed with as little disruption as possible.

In addition, South Africa remains convinced that the ratification of the Convention by both the United States and the Russian Federation — as the major declared possessors of chemical weapons — is fundamental to the success of the Convention. Consequently, we urge both these States to finalize their ratification of the Convention at the earliest possible time, particularly in the light of the approaching entry into force.

My Government also reaffirms its commitment to strengthening the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction by establishing a verifiable compliance regime for the Convention. It is our hope that the forthcoming Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention will give further impetus to the work of the ad hoc group and encourage it to complete its work as soon as possible in order that it can be presented to a special conference of the States parties to the Biological Weapons

Convention before the next review conference. In the interim, South Africa would encourage all States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention to participate in United Nations-administered confidence-building measures.

As a possessor of advanced technology and equipment, South Africa will continue to cooperate in the various international forums dedicated to the non-proliferation of the technologies and equipment which could be used in the development of weapons of mass destruction.

It is not just the threat that is constituted by all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery that is of serious concern to my Government, but also the build-up of conventional weapons beyond a level which can be considered legitimate for the purposes of self-defence. It is thus gratifying that at the 1996 session of the Disarmament Commission, agreement was reached on guidelines for international arms transfers.

Conventional weapons are the source of most of the death and suffering caused in conflicts around the world today, and it is therefore our hope that a greater emphasis will be placed on conventional armaments in all disarmament forums. The rebuilding and prosperity of society which is gained from various peace and democratization initiatives is curtailed by the accompanying proliferation of these arms and light weapons. South Africa would therefore encourage all States Members of the United Nations to support and participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and lend active support to General Assembly resolution 50/70 B on small arms and its panel of governmental experts mandated to assist the Secretary-General to prepare a report on small arms.

South Africa was pleased to host in September 1996 the first regional workshop of the panel of governmental experts on small arms established in pursuance of resolution 50/70 B. We are convinced that such workshops will contribute to a better understanding of the small arms proliferation problem and will assist in finding practical solutions to prevent the excessive accumulation and transfer of light weapons and small arms.

My Government, being a producer of conventional arms and equipment, is concerned at the growing problem of the proliferation of these weapons, especially after the cessation of armed conflicts, as well as in crime related activities. The magnitude of the problem is such, however, that only through appropriate national, regional and international action can the effects of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms be curtailed. What is required is a political commitment from countries to address this issue as a priority. South Africa, for its part, has tightened its arms export control policies and its law which regulates the possession of firearms.

While addressing this issue, I also wish to take up the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel landmines. South Africa has called for the world-wide elimination of anti-personnel landmines. To alleviate the suffering they cause, we are committed to reinforcing international cooperation for mine-clearance and the development of national capacities for mine clearance in mine-infested countries.

Recently, South Africa took part in the international strategy conference on anti-personnel landmines which was held in Ottawa, at the invitation of the Government of Canada, from 3 to 5 October 1996. Having taken part in that Conference, we endorsed the Ottawa Declaration, which commits 48 Governments, including several from Africa, and from the Southern African Development Community region in particular, to work together to ensure the earliest possible conclusion of a legally binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines. We are also committed to supporting the draft resolution on an international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines, which has been circulated for consideration by this Committee.

While the negotiations for an international prohibition on anti-personnel landmines would normally take place in an appropriate existing forum, we would be prepared to consider negotiations in a forum especially set up for this purpose. In taking part in any future negotiations, South Africa would also carefully consider the concerns of those countries which have legitimate difficulties in this regard. Nevertheless, our aim is to broaden the Ottawa group to include as many countries as possible, especially African countries. Our effort to broaden the international consensus on this issue is essential before any new agreement is concluded. In this context it is noteworthy that the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity has already called for a total ban on the manufacture and use of mines.

South Africa further welcomes the successful conclusion of the 1996 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects. The adoption of an amended

Protocol II on landmines, and the addition of the new Additional Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons were major steps forward in the development of the Convention itself, and also of international humanitarian law in general.

Nineteen ninety-six has been a successful year for disarmament and non-proliferation on many fronts. The achievements of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the successful conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons; the progress which has been made in increasing the areas of the globe covered by nuclear-weapon-free zones; the work which is being done to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention; and the imminent entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention are just examples of the work which has been done since we last met.

However, there is much that still needs to be done to achieve our common goal of the elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction and to end the human tragedy and suffering being caused by the proliferation of conventional weapons. Our work here in the First Committee must therefore be focused on ensuring that we maintain the momentum of our accomplishments.

The Chairman: I will now call on those delegations who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. Before I call upon the first speaker, I remind members of the Committee that in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, the number of interventions in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation, at a given meeting, should be limited to two per item. The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply should be limited to 10 minutes and the second should be limited to five minutes.

Mr. Kim Cheng Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I wish to speak in exercise of my right of reply to the representative of Japan, and to comment on that representative's statement.

My statement this afternoon was not intended to single out Japan without reason. My statement was based on facts and realities. Japan is increasing defence expenditures every year to suit the economic might of Japan. Now Japan is trying to amend its Constitution to allow it to dispatch its army to other countries. Japan is now trying to justify its arms build-up by citing the situation on the Korean peninsula.

We think it is serious that Japan is trying to justify past crimes. Japan says that it conquered Asian countries to liberate those peoples from Western colonialists. Japan is not going to apologize. In the Japanese Diet they officially reject apologizing to the Asian peoples. Successive Japanese officials have visited the Yasuguni Shrine, where they pay tribute to war criminals.

All this we understand to mean that Japan is trying to realize its ambition to become a military Power in Asia: they will once again make war against Asian nations if the occasion comes.

As for the nuclear issue, Japan is buying large quantities of nuclear materials from European countries. Japan also secretly imports nuclear technology from the United States. Japan boasts of its three non-nuclear principles, but it cannot adopt them as law. So, we really do not know what their intentions truly are. We really do not know how we can trust Japan.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.